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A home writing program was developed and implemented using 22 second-grade target students to increase writing proficiency by soliciting parent involvement with home writing and to improve attitudes toward writing. Students attending a north central Florida school were supplied with a writing suitcase containing thematic story starter cards, a parent guideline page, a time and comment card, and various writing and art materials. The success of the writing program was measured by comparing the scores of pre- and post-writing samples written to a prompt and by assessing pre- and post-surveys of parent and student interest in writing. Results indicated a moderate level of achievement for the target group: writing ability increased 19%, positive parental interest increased 15%, and positive student interest increased 13%. Findings suggest that subsequent utilization of the home writing program over a longer period of time could provide a vehicle to increase writing proficiency skills. The success of the program has led to plans for implementing the home writing program school-wide in kindergarten through grade three. (Includes three tables of data. Appendixes present data on scores, survey instruments, writing prompts, sample story starter cards, the parent guidelines, the rubric scoring scale for narrative writing, and student story samples. Contains 21 references.) (Author/RS)

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ED 372 400

DESIGNING A HOME WRITING PROGRAM TO STUDY THE EFFECTS OF INCREASED PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON SECOND GRADERS' WRITING SKILLS

by

Donna T. Sides

A Practicum Report

Submitted to the Faculty of the Center for Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in the National Database System for reference.

May 1994

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Abstract

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A home writing program was developed and implemented by the writer using 22 target students to increase writing proficiency by soliciting parent involvement with home writing and to improve attitudes toward writing. This program was accomplished by supplying a writing suitcase containing thematic story starter cards, a parent guideline page, a time and comment card, and various writing and art materials. The success of the writing program was measured by comparing the scores of a pre and post writing sample written to a prompt and by assessing pre and post surveys of parent and student interest in writing. The results indicated a moderate level of achievement for the target group. The record of scores indicated a 19 percent increase in writing ability, a 15 percent increase in positive parental interest, and a 13 percent increase in positive student interest. It was concluded that subsequent utilization of the home writing program over a longer period of time can provide a vehicle to increase writing proficiency skills. The success of the program has led to plans for implementing the home writing program school-wide in Grades Kindergarten through 3.

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I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

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Practicum Title Designing A Home Writing Program to Study the Effects of Increased Parental Involvement on Second Graders' Writing Skills

Student's Name Donna T. Sides

Program Site Idylwild Elementary School Date 6/10/94

Observer's Name Mary Esler Mary C Esler
(please print-------sign)

Observer's position Teacher Phone # 955-6709

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

I observed the student's participation and enthusiasm in the home writing success. Several Teachers plan to implement the same or similar programs for writing appropriate to their grade level as a result of Donna's success

Table of Contents

	Page
Title Page	i
Abstract	ii
Authorship Statement/Document Release	iii
Observer's Verification	iv
Table of Contents	v
Chapters	
I. Purpose	1
II. Research and Solution Strategy	8
III. Methodology	19
IV. Results	26
V. Recommendations	33
Reference List	34
Appendices	36
Appendix A: California Achievement Test Scores.	37
Appendix B: Writing Prompt Scores	39
Appendix C: Parent Letter	41
Appendix D: Parent Writing Interest Survey	43
Appendix E: Writing Prompt Pretest and Posttest	45

Appendix F: Writing Interest Survey for Students. 47

Appendix G: Sample Story Starter Cards 49

Appendix H: Parent Guideline Page 56

Appendix I: Together We Write/ Time and Comment Card 58

Appendix J: Rubric Scoring Scale for Narrative Writing 60

Appendix K: Student Story Samples 63

CHAPTER I

Purpose

The setting for this practicum was a North Central Florida elementary school housing grades Pre-K Handicapped and Headstart through fifth grade. The school was established in 1964 on the present site and at that time contained 23 classrooms, an administration building, a media center and a cafeteria on approximately 12 acres. In subsequent years 10 portable classrooms were moved to the campus. A major renovation and addition was completed in November 1993 and the existing facility now consists of seven portable classrooms, an art suite, a music suite, two E.S.E. preschool handicapped rooms, seven E.S.E. resource rooms, an administration building, additional parking, covered walk ways, basketball court, and the original 23 classrooms and cafeteria were completely renovated.

The student body consisted of 261 Black children, 440 White children and 39 others (Asian, Hispanic,

Indian) for a total enrollment of 740. There were 27 gifted, 51 mildly handicapped students and 10 moderately handicapped students. According to a school report, 65 percent of the student body was on the free and assisted lunch program. The attendance rate was 92.86 percent and the student mobility rate was 19.45 percent. According to the local chamber of commerce, the community and surrounding area had a population of approximately 273,000. With the presence of a large state university and complementary medical center, and three junior colleges in the immediate area, the economy was based on these educational institutions' requirements and needs. The result was a semi-transient professional population with a more permanent, non-professional work force. The unemployment rate was 4.8 percent.

The writer had been employed at this particular district for 10 years and held a position as a second grade teacher with daily responsibility for a class of 22 students. The current class contained five gifted students, one learning disabled student and 16 students of average abilities. The Florida Department of Education had implemented Blueprint 2000, parental

involvement, and the state writing mandate to enhance the children's writing and literacy skills.

The Problem Statement:

> In a literate society writing is necessary and the lives of citizens are geared toward knowing how to respond to many things in writing. It becomes the trademark of sophistication for individuals, as well as creating a foundation for the history of human groups. (Margolin, 1983)

It was in agreement with this statement that one of the main goals of the department of education and the local school board was to improve the writing abilities of children. The school recognized the importance of these skills. First experiences with writing must be meaningful so that the students view themselves as real writers.

The local school board had mandated writing portfolios for grades kindergarten through third grade to enhance writing skills and to prepare children for the grade 4 writing assessment required by the state. The state writing assessment results in the spring of 1993 for 107 fourth graders at the school indicated an average score of 2.2 out of possible six, well below expected norms. The district average score was 2.1 and the average score statewide was 2.0.

Changes in family life have distanced parents from schools. Home life is so closely tied to school performance that 70 percent of elementary principals now keep formal records of each student's family structure (McCormick, 1990). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as quoted by McCormick, 73 percent of mothers of school age children work outside the home, nearly one-fourth of all children under the age of 18 live with a single parent, and only seven percent of school age children live in a two-parent household where there is only one wage earner. It is understandable that parents have great difficulty in finding time to devote to their children's reading and writing.

There has been a decline in writing for both educational and societal reasons. Writing is less central than it was in the days before textbooks and workbooks. Photojournalism and telecommunication are replacing journalistic writing in the print media. Writing is less common than it was in the days before the telephone (Lamme, 1984). It was the writer's goal to involve parents as partners in their children's

writing activities which would hopefully improve the children's writing ability.

The target group was a class of 22 second grade students in a self-contained classroom. The mean score for these 22 students was 56 percent in language skills on the California Achievement Test in the Spring of 1993 as first grade (Appendix A:37). In January of 1994 this writer administered a narrative writing prompt to the target group. Students were given 45 minutes to write a narrative writing sample. In a narrative prompt, the writer tells about a personal or fictional experience based on a real or imagined event. The writing samples were judged on focus, organization, elaboration and convention using a rubric scoring method based on a perfect score of 6. This target group had an average score of 1.3 (Appendix B:39). During this assignment the writer observed frustration and lack of interest by some of the children because they lacked experience and perceived no useful purpose for writing.

School records indicated that the target group was composed of eight children from working, single-parent homes, nine children from two-parent homes where both

parents work, four children from two-parent homes where only one parent worked outside the house, and one single non-working parent. A total of 77.3 percent of the target group lived in homes where all the adults worked full-time.

Clearly, past research, current writing scores, family structure statistics, and state and local concerns about writing indicated the necessity to improve students' writing. It was the writer's objective to design a home writing program to study the effects of increased parental involvement on the child's writing ability.

Outcome Objectives:

Reutzel and Fawson (1990) stated that increasing numbers of educators recognize that school-based reading and writing programs are far more effective when parents are involved. According to Graves (1987), children should develop confidence in their writing abilities. Children who are encouraged to write expressively are presented with an important message, a faith that they have something meaningful and important to say. Most children come to school already knowing something about the conventions of the written

language, due largely to the efforts of parents (Goodman, 1984).

Positive verbal interactions between parent and child are clearly important in literacy development, particularly writing. Therefore, parent collaboration is needed for students to become better writers. The objectives of this practicum were:

During the 12-week implementation period, 65 percent of the 22 student target group will show a 30 percent gain between the pre and post writing sample written to a prompt as measured on a rubric scoring scale.

During the 12-week implementation period, 65 percent of parents will show a 45 percent increase in parental involvement as measured by the tabulated scores of a pre and post Parent Writing Interest Survey.

During the 12-week implementation period, 50 percent of the target group will show a 45 percent increase in writing interest as measured by the calculated scores of the pre and post Writing Interest Survey for Students.

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

> Human beings have a deep need to represent their experiences through writing. Writing allows people to turn chaos into something beautiful. Humans write to understand life. (Calkins, 1986:3)

Communicating effectively in a complex future world seems a distant goal for many people; there are 27 million illiterate adults in America (Edwards and Maloy, 1992). The demands for literacy have increased during this century as we have moved from an industrial to technological, informational based society. Literacy has become a basic skill affecting school success and employment opportunities (Marling, 1991). Current estimates indicate that 90 percent of all occupations require some reading and writing skills (Harste and Mihulchy, 1984).

Literacy has become an important goal for educators. Literacy, the process of learning to read and write, begins at home long before children enter

school (Dailey, 1991). This process does not officially begin at any particular age; rather, it develops as children gain experience with language and print. The two processes of reading and writing develop simultaneously.

Rasinski and Fredericks (1988) pointed out that parents are increasingly viewed as a vital link element in the successful literacy development of their children. The process of becoming literate is also viewed as a natural process; reading and writing are processes that children participate in naturally, long before they come to school.

The concept of emergent literacy is based on the following interpretations about literacy and about how children learn according to Morrison (1991):

1. Most children begin processes involved in reading and writing long before entering school.

2. Literacy is a social process that develops within a context where children have the opportunity to interact with and respond to printed language and to other children and adults who are using printed language. In this context, children derive meaning from reading and writing.

3. Reading and writing involve cognitive and social abilities that children use in processes of becoming literate and obtaining meaning from listening, speaking, reading and writing.

4. The culture group in which children develop literacy has a direct influence on how literacy develops. (p. 279)

Hannon and Wienberger (1990) defined the power of the parent's role by how they could provide for emergent readers and writers: (1) be a model of literacy, (2) provide opportunities for learning, and (3) recognize the child's achievements. Wilson, Mosley and Shirley (1993) noted that children should be encouraged to write at a very young age. As children are given more experiences and are provided with additional practice, they become increasingly literate and aware of the importance of written language. Experimenting with writing gives children not only a chance to express themselves, but to gain new experiences with literacy. Wilson, Mosley and Shirley (1993) concluded that children write as a natural extension of their desire to communicate both to themselves and others what they know about their social and material world. They learn to hypothesize,

discover, invent, correct and approximate the conventions of writing.

Parents cannot avoid being the center of the early education of their children. They create the early images about learning that will shape the child's attitude for many years into the future (Smith, 1990). Children look to parents and other adult caregivers for their first and often most important demonstration of language (Reutzel and Fawson, 1990). Studies (Henderson, 1989) indicate that student achievement improves and continues to improve whenever parents help their children. Low-income and minority graduates of preschool programs with high levels of parental involvement will consistently out-perform their peers in high school. It is the family, not school, that has the most profound effect on students. Many teachers do not appreciate this instinctively, and parents often are under the impression that the school does not want them to participate (Smith, 1990).

Rasinski and Fredericks (1988), drawing upon a significant body of research, have confirmed the impact parental involvement can have on the literacy growth of their children. This research links parents as active

models of the writing program with the goal of improving children's interest in writing. To ensure success with parental involvement, Fredericks and Rasinski (1988) have outlined guiding principles for the development of parent-child literacy efforts.

Internal Interest. The reasons for reading and writing should relate directly to the child's life and interests.

Regular Daily Time. As little as 20 minutes a day of interaction can establish life-long literacy habits.

Informality. Everyday informal activities lend themselves to spontaneous learning. Writing and reading can become pleasurable, natural pursuits.

Interaction. Parents and children should share, interact and talk when reading and writing.

Tolerance and Patience. Reading and writing growth is not always as fast as anticipated. Children need to move at their own pace and developmental level.

Real Literacy Activities. Tasks that children are asked to perform should reflect real literacy in form as well as function.

While much has been written about how to involve parents in helping their children become better

readers, much less has been done to devise effective plans and approaches for involving parents as their children become writers (Reutzel and Fawson, 1990). The problem is aggravated by the fact that many parents are just as fearful of writing as their children. Therefore, teachers must develop strategies which will draw the parents into an active role in promoting a positive attitude toward writing and creating an at-home environment which encourages the child to write. Goldys (1991) developed the Write Stuff Workshop, a joint venture for bringing parents and their children together as allies and to overcome fears in writing. Many parents want to support the teacher, but may not know where to begin. The workshop provided home writing ideas, a home writing center diagram, and 10 ways to set a writing attitude.

1. Write to your children.
2. Let your children see you write.
3. Write with your children.
4. Talk with your children before you write.
5. Encourage your young author to draw.
6. Encourage your children to take risks with writing.
7. Let your children know they have something to say.
8. Emphasize the fun of writing.
9. Listen to your children read their writings.
10. Read to your children. (p. 58)

Lamme (1984) indicated that if parents can help to foster a sense of ownership, children can develop a positive attitude toward reading and writing.

> Emergent literacy studies indicate that an important aspect of children's natural acquisition of literacy is their attachment to favorite book authors and their sense of ownership for the pieces they have written. (Lamme 1984:204)

Parents have the responsibility to create an environment for children that develops confidence and success in writing. When parents and teachers understand the processes underlying writing development, they can help children understand the meaningful home and school activities that promote its growth. Goldys (1991) believes that parents must be encouraged to write together with their children--a common fear can become a common bond.

Once a positive attitude and environment are established, the parents must be encouraged to establish a program of activities which will further encourage the student to write. Lamme (1984) suggested a progression of activities commencing with simply giving the child something to write about, establishing a need for written communication in the home, and

finally, having the child deliver written messages. The implementation of such activities, while desirable, requires a great deal of effort and time by the parents.

Teachers could be of a great help in establishing home writing programs by providing parents with the necessary tools and materials to create a shared experience in the home. Reutzel and Fawson (1990) experimented with their "Traveling Tales" in which a backpack containing writing materials was sent home with an individual student. The program was very popular and participation grew to involve parents, siblings and neighbors. The parents also used the program with their older children. The researchers determined that one of the keys to parental involvement was direct contact either by telephone or in person with the parents. To help parents, Reutzel and Fawson derived the following writing guideline ideas from Graves (1985), Calkins (1986), and Hansen (1987).

1. Help the child brainstorm ideas for a topic.

2. Rehearse the story by talking.

3. Remember that the first draft will contain misspellings and incomplete ideas. Encourage the child to write without worrying about grammar and spelling.

4. Listen to the first draft.

5. Talk about and encourage the child's best efforts.

6. After a second draft help the child edit for spelling and grammar corrections.

7. Listen to the final story.

What then are the benefits and rewards for children when they write? Calkins (1986) noted that writing not only helps a child learn to write, but also assists in learning to read. Writing helps the child to see words move from left to right, to sequence, to understand cause and effect, and to use comprehension skills. Writing skills enhance the child's (1) self concept, (2) sensitivity to views of others, (3) understanding that print has meaning, (4) decision making, and (5) development of longer attention spans. Graves (1985) stated that there are deeper rewards in writing. Writing gives children a voice, helps them to define the world, and gain new insight into their own

behavior and experiences. Graves also credits writing with the enhancement of thinking skills such as classification, synthesis, analysis and transformation. As children become better writers, they become better readers. All writers frequently reread their own words as they write. In a Florida county school system, researchers made a study of 500 first grade and kindergarten students. When the children were allowed to write before they could read, their median reading scores rose 25 percentile points over classes for the two previous years who learned to read before writing (Graves, 1985).

Solution Strategy. According to Smith (1990) research indicates:

> that parental involvement helps children learn more effectively. Teachers who are successful at involving parents in their children's school work are successful because they work at it. Teachers and schools need to find ways of giving parents encouragement and ideas. (p. 332)

This writer concurred with these intentions and solicited parent participation and cooperation in a home writing program in a second grade classroom. The writer hoped to instill positive attitudes and interest in writing and to improve writing abilities in

participating second grade students. It was further the goal of this writer to increase parental involvement by providing the means and the motivation for parents to share writing experiences with their children.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Pre-Planning

During the week that preceded the first week of the 12-week implementation period, a letter informing parents about a new home writing program was sent to all parents of the target group. The letter (Appendix C:41) informed parents about "Author's Suitcase," the home writing program in which parent cooperation and participation were encouraged. The letter was returned and signed by all of the 22 parents of the target group. A Parent Writing Interest Survey (Appendix D:43) on how much writing occurred in the home was completed and returned by participating parents.

A pretest writing sample written to a prompt (Appendix E:45) was taken by 22 target students during a 45-minute period. A Writing Interest Survey For Students (Appendix F:47) was given to all 22 target students.

Week One

A thematic "Author's Suitcase" was checked out on Monday and returned on Thursday by all 22 students whose parents signed up to participate in the home writing program. The "Author's Suitcase" included paper, scissors, glue sticks, crayons, markers, pencils, related magazine pictures, an individual thematic story starter suggestion card (Appendix G:49) and a parent guideline page (Appendix H:56).

A time and comment sheet, "Together We Write" (Appendix I:58) was included, which the parent completed before returning the "Author's Suitcase" with all of the materials to school on Thursday.

A thematic approach was chosen for the "Author's Suitcase" to provide creative and developmentally appropriate story starters for narrative writing style. In narrative writing, the author writes about a personal or fictional experience based on a real or imagined event. For the "Author's Suitcase" a variety of themes was selected in an effort to cover the varied interests of the targeted population.

Weeks Two-Twelve

The "Author's Suitcases" were checked out each Monday so that every child received a different theme of writing activities each week. The same procedure was followed each week as outlined in week one. The students returned the "Author's Suitcases" on Thursday and stories written at home were collected and placed in individual student folders. The "Author's Suitcases" were repacked with supplies and "Together We Write" (Appendix I:58) sheets by the teacher for the following week. The teacher retained the time card and comment sheet for future record keeping.

After the "Author's Suitcases" were returned on the twelfth week, the Parent Writing Interest Survey (Appendix D:43) was sent out again and collected, and the post-test writing prompt was given. The target group completed a Writing Interest Survey for Students (Appendix F:47). Data from the pre and posttest and past surveys were calculated and recorded.

Examples of Stories and Themes

The students enthusiastically shared their stories aloud to the class each week. There were 12 basic themes for selection in the writing program.

Under each theme 10 to 12 story starters were listed on the story starter cards (Appendix G:49). Art supplies were included to enhance and extend the stories.

One child who chose the theme "In Time," wrote a play entitled <u>One Hundred Years From Now</u> (Appendix K:63). She assigned parts to students, held rehearsals, produced props, and then presented the play to the class. The play was focused on the topic, was well-sequenced, and even had an ecologically correct ending.

Another student constructed a poster to illustrate <u>Ten Good Reasons to Stay Up Late</u> from the "In Time" theme. In her writing the student used mature language, focused and expanded on the topic, and used a sense of humor (Appendix K:63).

An especially popular theme was "Magical Things." One student wrote the story <u>I Saw a Magical Creature</u> (Appendix K:63). This well-written piece was based on the imaginary character of a leprechaun. The student used culturally correct expressions, included fantasy and humor, and followed a logical sequential pattern. To enhance the telling of the story, the student made a leprechaun sock puppet.

The students used computer class time to publish their stories. The children created drawings on the printed pages which were then bound into books to take home. While doing this, the children recognized their abilities to expand on their individual ideas and experiences.

Comments from the Parent Comment Card

During the 12-week implementation period, many valuable comments were recorded by parents on the "Together We Write" sheet (Appendix I:58). The feedback from parents was important for the writer to monitor the set-up of the program, understand specific problems and strengths with the process writing, observe attitudes toward writing, and follow parental interaction and involvement.

One interesting comment by a mother was, "She has learned not to begin sentences with and this week. She is off to a good start!"

Another mother's comment disclosed that her child preferred to work by herself: "She is so independent. She closed herself up in her room and worked for two hours by herself."

Several comments displayed communication and collaboration between children and parents: "We had fun reminiscing together about our trip to Wolfe Island." "It gave us time to remember his eighth birthday." "It gave us a chance to think about some of our house rules."

Parents wrote supportive comments about the overall writing program: "It's encouraging to see her eagerly do this without complaining." "He is very excited about this program, and I think it is a great thing for him to learn how to write stories."

The time and comment cards were consistently returned, and it was evident from the children's revised stories and final copies that quality interaction time had taken place between the parents and children.

Throughout the 12-week writing program, the participating students were given the opportunity to read aloud to the class the stories that they had written at home. Also, the students published their writings on the classroom computers. The students bound their published writings into a book. The writer

recognized that a finished product enabled parents and children to appreciate their joint written efforts.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The primary objective was that 65 percent of the target population would show a 30 percent gain between the pre and post writing samples written to a prompt. The results indicated that the average overall gain of the group was 19 percent. The results show that 100 percent of the 22 students experienced a moderate gain in writing ability.

At the beginning of the 12-week period, 100 percent of the 22 target parents consented to participate in the program. By weeks seven through 12, six families dropped out of the program because of time limitations due to extra curricular activities and/or because of lack of parental interest. Several of the parents wrote notes stating that they had problems getting their children to cooperate. The remaining 18 families continued to check out and return the "Author's Suitcases" with well-written stories. These parents indicated continued involvement on the

"Together We Write" (Appendix I:58) cards. One parent commented: "My child is taking more time to think about what she is writing and how her writing sounds when she reads it aloud." Another parent commented: "I can tell that he is learning a lot more about grammar and sentence construction."

The overall positive responses showed that parents felt that the program was helping to improve their children's writing ability. The writer concluded that utilizing the home writing program over the entire school year could provide a mechanism for greatly improving writing proficiency skills. The following table shows the results of the writing prompt. Mean scores were converted to percentages by dividing a possible score of six on the Rubric Scoring Scale (Appendix J:60) into the mean scores on the pre and posttest.

Table 1

Writing Prompt Scores

Pretest and Posttest

Student	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
6493	3	4	1
4670	2	3	1
0574	1	3	2
4824	1	2	1
3186	1	3	2
4930	3	4	1
3358	1	2	1
6810	0	1	1
8106	2	4	2
0760	2	3	1
4711	2	4	2
8695	2	3	1
6983	1	2	1
4981	1	2	1
0467	1	2	1
2511	1	1	0
6584	1	2	1
8122	2	4	2
6469	1	3	2
6597	1	2	1
6258	1	1	0
4527	1	1	0
Mean	1.4	2.5	1.2
Percentage	23%	42%	19%

The Parent Writing Interest Survey (Appendix D:43) referred to in the second objective showed an overall average 15 percent increase in positive responses. The participating parents exhibited a decided increase in writing involvement with their children. The following table exhibits a record of the responses.

Table 2

Parent Writing Interest Survey

Positive Responses

Questions	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
#1	7	9	2
#2	9	11	2
#3	10	13	3
#4	9	11	2
#5	5	8	3
#6	8	10	2
#7	10	12	2
#8	8	10	2
#9	10	11	1
#10	11	12	1
Total	87	107	20
Percentage	40%	55%	15%

The expected increase of 45 percent was not met, but the writer observed and recorded good parental involvement. Students' stories showed that parents encouraged students to write about a variety of topics, make related art projects, and return the "Writing Suitcases" to school promptly. The stories were well-focused and demonstrated good organizational patterns. Parents spent a total class average of 27 hours per week writing with their children according to the "Together We Write" Card (Appendix I:58). Some parents commented: "We made an outline and with extra encouragement, she wrote with confidence." "This is such a neat program, because I can see him organizing and expanding his thoughts."

The writer concluded that the parents showed enthusiasm for the overall program and appreciated how powerful their influence can be with their child's writing.

The third objective was that 50 percent of the target group would show a 45 percent increase toward writing as measured by positive responses on Student Writing Interest Survey (Appendix F:47). As shown in

the following table, this 13 percent gain is a moderate increase in the level of positive student responses.

Table 3

Student Writing Interest Survey

Positive Responses

Questions	Pretest	Posttest	Gain
#1	5	8	3
#2	7	10	3
#3	15	14	-1
#4	11	14	3
#5	10	16	6
#6	11	17	6
#7	13	13	0
#8	8	6	-2
#9	5	10	5
#10	11	12	1
Total	96	120	24
Percentage	42%	55%	13%

On each Friday students enthusiastically read their stories aloud to the class. One student even wrote a play and organized other students to perform the play. Students shared dioramas, puppets, masks,

and pictures made with art supplies in the suitcases. The stories were detailed, followed a logical sequence, and focused on the topic. The conventions of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization were well-followed.

Based on the data collected and the percentage of participating families, the writer concluded that students who participated in a home writing program with parent involvement developed familiarity with writing practice. Therefore, the students demonstrated success and experienced a positive attitude toward writing.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

This program and the results were shared with the teachers, curriculum resource teacher, and principal of the school. The overall plan was presented to the Blueprint 2000 Advisory Committee made up of parents, teachers, and business partners.

The program was made available for use within the school. The home writing program was recommended for Kindergarten through third grade. Through available funding, plans are being made to implement the program as a part of the overall school writing program. It is the hope of the writer that the program will be used as a tool for parental involvement in writing.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

California Achievement Test Scores

Appendix A

California Achievement Test Scores

Spring of 1993

Target Group as First Graders

Student ID No.	Score
6493	0.97
4670	0.63
0574	0.57
4824	0.57
3186	0.46
4930	0.95
3358	0.31
6810	0.11
8106	0.99
0760	0.97
4711	0.66
8695	0.98
6983	0.59
4981	0.34
0467	0.44
2511	0.59
6584	0.39
8122	0.33
6469	0.27
6597	0.49
6258	0.34
4527	0.27
Mean Score =	0.56

APPENDIX B

Writing Prompt Scores

Appendix B

Writing Prompt Scores

January 1994

Target Group as Second Graders

Student ID No.	Rubric Scoring
6493	3
4670	1
0574	1
4824	1
3186	1
4930	3
3358	1
6810	0
8106	2
0760	2
4711	1
8695	2
6983	1
4981	1
0467	1
2511	1
6584	1
8122	1
6469	1
6597	1
6258	1
4527	1
Mean Score	1.3

APPENDIX C

Parent Letter

Introducing Author's Suitcase!

Dear Parents,

Writing activities provided at home can have a great influence upon your child's reading and writing development. The Author's Suitcase is a writing kit that includes a variety of writing materials for use by you and your child at home. Parents can have a powerful influence on children's writing, because they already have insight into their child's language development. When parents and children share writing together just as they share books, children become more interested and active writers.

Here is how the home writing program works. Every Monday, each child may check out an Author's Suitcase and every Thursday it will be returned. The kit is filled with various writing materials, a parent guideline sheet, and story starter ideas based around a theme. Themes vary for each kit.

Parents are asked to write for thirty (30) minutes a week with the child. Parents are also asked to sign a time and comment card to be sent back on each Thursday with the suitcase.

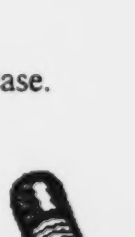
If you and your child would like to participate in the program, please sign below. Please return this signed sheet along with the attached Parent Survey by Friday.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Donna Sides.

Ms. Donna Sides

_____ will participate in Author's Suitcase.



APPENDIX D

Parent Writing Interest Survey

APPENDIX D

Name _____

Date _____

PARENT WRITING INTEREST SURVEY

For each item circle your response:	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Almost never
1. Does your child see you write ?	4	3	2	1
2. Do you encourage your child to write ?	4	3	2	1
3. Do you provide writing materials for your child ?	4	3	2	1
4. Does your child know how to handle writing materials carefully ?	4	3	2	1
5. Do you provide opportunities for your child to write letters, stories, poems, etc. ?	4	3	2	1
6. Do you listen to your child's stories, poems, etc. ?	4	3	2	1
7. Do you talk about your child's writing ?	4	3	2	1
8. Do you feel writing is an important way to express feelings ?	4	3	2	1
9. Do you feel writing is an important skill for your child to learn ?	4	3	2	1
10. Are you available to assist your child with re-writing if necessary ?	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX E

Writing Prompt Pre Test and Post Test

APPENDIX E

Pre Test Writing Prompt

Most of us have been on a trip at one time or another. It might have been a school field trip, a vacation, or a visit to someone.

Before you begin writing think about a trip that you have taken. Where did you go ? Who went with you ? How did you get there ? What did you see or do, and how did you feel about it?

Now write to tell the reader of your paper about a trip that you have taken.

Post Test Writing Prompt

We have all been embarrassed at some time in our lives. It could have been something only you know about, or something that happened in front of other people. For example, it could have been something like falling down in the hall at school, being the last one chosen for a team, forgetting your part in a play or recital, or dropping the ball during a game.

Before you start writing think about a time when you were embarrassed. Think about where you were, who was with involved, what happened, and why it embarrassed you.

Now write to tell about your embarrassing incident.

APPENDIX F

Writing Interest Survey for Students

APPENDIX F

Name _____ 48

Date _____

WRITING INTEREST SURVEY FOR STUDENTS

For each item circle your response:	Almost always	Often	Sometimes	Almost never
1. I write letters to my family and friends.	4	3	2	1
2. I write stories and poems.	4	3	2	1
3. I revise what I have written.	4	3	2	1
4. I like topics I choose myself.	4	3	2	1
5. I use writing to help me learn.	4	3	2	1
6. I like what I write.	4	3	2	1
7. Writing is a very important way for me to express my feelings.	4	3	2	1
8. When I have free time, I'd rather write than read.	4	3	2	1
9. I leave notes for my family and friends.	4	3	2	1
10. My family helps me with my writing at home.	4	3	2	1

APPENDIX G

Sample Story Starter Cards

APPENDIX G

STORY STARTER CARD
Author's Suitcase Theme : Holidays/Trips

At the mountains
Going Camping
The graveyard
The wedding
When I went to the restaurant
Going swimming
When I went night rollerskating
When I went fishing
The day my family and I went to the park
When we went to the farm in Grade Two
When I went to the snow
My journey up to Swan Hill

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme : Accidents

I fell off my sister's horse
One day I fell out the window
Once I got stuck in an elevator
Ooh, a snake crawled over my leg
The neighbors cat got run over
The fire
Help, I got lost in the store
The day I fell over my handlebars
The time my friend broke his leg
I fell in a mud puddle on my way home

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme : Personal Achievement

Chicken pox
When I saw the firecrackers
Cubs
Ballet
Football
Brownies
The dancing competition
Oh, no - it's my turn
When I won the swimming meet
The day I got my glasses
The day I got my horse
The time I first started school
When my photo was in the newspaper

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme : Family/Birthdays/Home

When my grandfather died
Playing in the garden
Happy Birthday
When my dog had puppies
When I baby-sat my cousin
When we got our swimming pool
The day my brother was born
When I cleaned my dad's car
When my sister found a cat
My chores
Our cook-outs
When my family and I went to the zoo
When my mother went to the hospital

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme: Magical Things

A magic carpet ride
Three wishes from a magic lamp
I saw a magical creature
I can do magic, abracadabra!
The magic beans
A magic mirror
I found a magic wand
I don't believe in magic pencils, but..
A ghost was here last night
The magic cloud

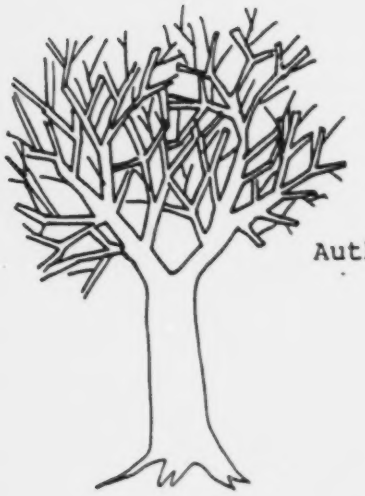
After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme: Animals, Animals Everywhere

A huge bear came onto the highway
I can fly like a bird
A bee stung me
I found a stray hippopotamus
The goat has on a coat
If an alligator came to my house
If I were an animal, I'd be a...
Worms are wonderful
A mouse is in the house
My dog talked to me

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.



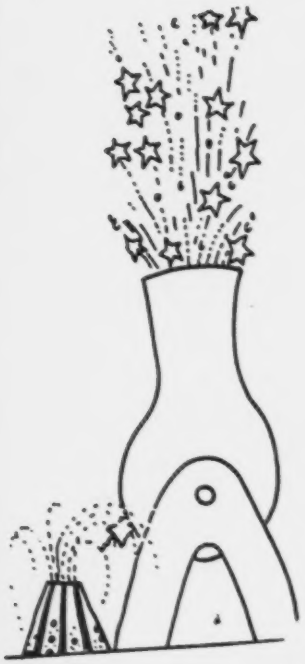
STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme : What if...

If I were a whale
If I were a teacher
If I were a garbage can I'd say
If I were invisible
If I was an adult
If I found ten dollars
If trees had no leaves
If I was the President
If I could wish for anything

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD



Author's Suitcase Theme: Way Out

Clouds remind me of
Watch out, flying saucers
The sun is
The sky is beautiful to me because
I saw a visitor from outer space
I'm floating on a cloud
Lost in space
A hot balloon ride
Look at the constellations

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme : In Time

One hundred years from now, I'll..
Ten good reasons to stay up late
When I grow up
It's finally spring and I want to
If I had lived in 1950
The best things about summer are
It's time to plant a garden
This morning, I
My most fun time ever was when

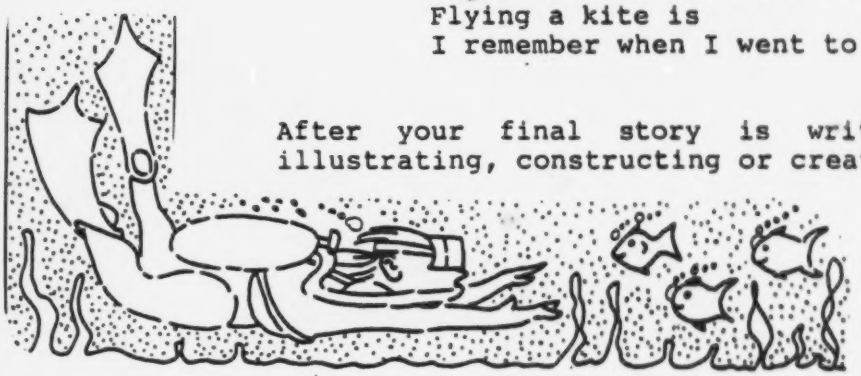
After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

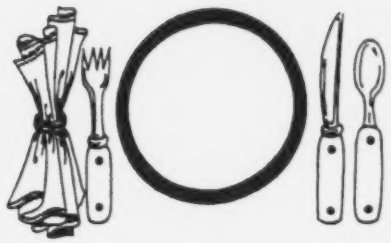
Author's Suitcase Theme: Fun Times

When I have to play indoors, I
If I had a camera, I'd
The biggest mess I ever made was
Fun with a bike
On my birthday,I
On the playground,
Right now I'd like to be in
Flying a kite is
I remember when I went to

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.



STORY STARTER CARD



Author's Suitcase Theme: Yummy

Ice cream cones
Bubble gum
The world's biggest sandwich
When I make my own breakfast
Pickles are
My favorite restaurant is
In my refrigerator
Pizza is
I made dinner for
Some good foods for my body are

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

STORY STARTER CARD

Author's Suitcase Theme: Favorites

My favorite book is
My favorite person is
My favorite way to travel is
My favorite toy is
My favorite game is
My favorite animal is
My favorite movie is
My ten most favorite things are
My favorite food is
My favorite place is

After your final story is written, use art materials for illustrating, constructing or creating.

APPENDIX H

Parent Guideline Page

APPENDIX H

AUTHOR'S SUITCASE GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS

1. How to get started

   Make a topic list or choose a story starter. Children like to write about familiar topics.

2. Beginning writing

   Children may want to talk about or rehearse the story before writing. When they begin to write the first draft, encourage them not to worry about the spelling and grammar. Organization of ideas is what is important at this stage.

3. Conferencing

   Child reads the story to parents. It is important that the child feels that it is his or her creation.

4. Questioning

   When the child is finished reading the story, help to clarify meanings, expand ideas, describe settings, and add to the information.

5. Revising

   The child works independently after the conference.

6. Final Conference

   Child revises and rereads the rough draft. Ask the child to circle difficult spelling words. Assist with spelling and grammar.

7. Finished Product

   Child writes a nice copy of the final draft. For fun, encourage creative art work to go with the story.

******Remember to send the finished story back to school on Thursday in the suitcase to share with the class.

APPENDIX I

Together We Write

Time and Comment Card

Together We Write

DATE _____

PARENT'S NAME _____

CHILD'S NAME _____

TIME SPENT WRITING TOGETHER THIS WEEK _____

COMMENTS _____

_____

Together We Write

DATE _____

PARENT'S NAME _____

CHILD'S NAME _____

TIME SPENT WRITING TOGETHER THIS WEEK _____

COMMENTS _____

_____

APPENDIX J

Rubric Scoring Scale for Narrative Writing

APPENDIX J

Rubric Scoring Scale

As found in the 1993 Florida Department of Education, Florida Writes ! publication, pp. 9-10.

DEFINITION OF NARRATIVE WRITING

In narration, the writer tells about a personal or a fictional experience or tells a story based on a real or imagined event. Narrative writing is characterized, as appropriate, by insight, creativity, drama, suspense, humor, or fantasy. The unmistakable purpose of this type of writing is to create for the reader a central theme or impression. In a successful narration, all details work together in an integrated way to create a central theme or impression. The writing has a clear, identifiable story line that is easy to follow and paraphrase.

SCORE POINTS IN RUBRIC

6 Points

The writing is focused on the topic, has a logical organizational pattern (including a beginning, middle, conclusion, and transitional devices), and has ample supporting ideas or examples. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. Subject/verb agreement and verb and noun forms are generally correct. With few exceptions, the sentences are complete, except when fragments are used purposefully. Various kinds of sentence structures are used.

5 Points

The writing is focused on the topic with adequate supporting ideas or examples. There is an organizational pattern, although a few lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. Word choice is adequate but may lack precision. Most sentences are complete, although a few fragments may occur. There may be occasional errors in subject/verb agreement and in standard forms of verbs and nouns, but not enough to impede communication. The conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally followed. Various kinds of sentence structures are used.

4 Points

The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. An organizational pattern is evident, although lapses may occur. The paper demonstrates a sense of completeness or wholeness. In some areas of the response, the supporting ideas may contain specifics and details, while in other areas, the supporting ideas may not be developed. Word choice is generally adequate. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Rubric Scoring Scale

As found in the 1993 Florida Department of Education, Florida Writes ! publication, pp. 9-10.

3 Points

The writing is generally focused on the topic, although it may contain some extraneous or loosely related information. Although an organizational pattern has been attempted and some transitional devices have been used, lapses may occur. The paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some supporting ideas or examples may not be developed. Word choice is adequate but limited, predictable, and occasionally vague. Knowledge of the conventions of punctuation and capitalization is demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly. There has been an attempt to use a variety of sentence structures, although most are simple constructions.

2 Points

The writing may be slightly related to the topic or may offer little relevant information and few supporting ideas or examples. The writing that is relevant to the topic exhibits little evidence of an organizational pattern or use of transitional devices. Development of supporting ideas may be inadequate or illogical. Word choice may be limited or immature. Frequent errors may occur in basic punctuation and capitalization, and commonly used words may be frequently misspelled. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

1 Point

The writing may only minimally address the topic because there is little, if any, development of supporting ideas, and unrelated information may be included. The writing that is relevant to the topic does not exhibit an organizational pattern; few, if any, transitional devices are used to signal movement in the text. Supporting ideas may be sparse, and they are usually provided through lists, clichés, and limited or immature word choice. Frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and sentence structure may impede communication. The sentence structure may be limited to simple constructions.

Unscorable

The paper is unscorable because

- the response is not related to what the prompt requested the student to do.
- the response is simply a rewording of the prompt.
- the response is a copy of a published work.
- the student refused to write.
- the response is illegible.

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APPENDIX K

Student Story Samples

"My Good Excuses to Stay Up Late"

I can never convince my mom to let me stay up late! Well, maybe one of these 10 good reasons will do the trick? Here are my 10 good reasons. To stay up and watch my favorite T.V. show. To do my homework [NOT!]. To read a book I'd like to finish. To make something with my bead art set. To make ice cream with my ice cream maker. To play a board game or cards. To play barbies. To write a letter to my cousin Jamie. To do chores [NOT!]. To pick out clothes for school. I think it won't work. What about you? Will your mom let you stay up late? Well, maybe someday.

"I Saw A Magical Creature"

One day I was walking down a big cliff. Suddenly, I heard a noise I looked around and saw a.... CREATURE!!!!

"Help!" said the creature. "I'll grant you three wishes if you get me out of this hole." I let down a rope and got out the creature. "Thank you very much" said the creature. "Wait a second, you're a...a...Leprechaun!" I said. "Right you are mate," said the Leprechaun. Now how about those three wishes? Well, I wish I could have my own car," I said. "Abracadabra whibaling wor, make this young fellow have his own car!!!! In a matter of seconds a car was standing right at my feet. "All right," I said, "my own car!!!" I drove the car and accidentally crashed into a tree. Then I got grounded for ten weeks because of the crash. Now I knew that every time I make a wish I get in trouble. Then I had an ida. I wished for the little Leprechaun to disappear!

"100 Years From Now"

Nikki: I wonder if we will ever get this book report down on paper before tomorrow.
Al: How many pages is it supposed to be?
Nikki: It is supposed to be 3 pages long.
Al: We have to write that all in one day.
Nikki: Yeah, let's start.
Next Morning
Al: Nikki, did you finish the book report?
Nikki: Yeah. I finished all of it.
Janna: Magan, Al, would you like to read your book report?
Nikki: Sure.
Janna: O.K., go ahead.
Nikki: 100 years from now we will be dead, but maybe one in our family will still be alive. We will drive a car that runs by the sun, and we will eat a funny type of food out of bottles.
Kyle: Ha, little sister. You forgot your lunch.
Nikki: All you want to do is embarrass me.
Kyle: That is true.
Daniel: Bye Kyle, that is enough. Would you like me to walk you to your classroom, Kyle?
Kyle: No, but tell my little sister that she is going to get in trouble.
Daniel: If you want to tell her something, you can tell her at home.
Kyle: O.K., you may let me go now.
Daniel: Don't get that tone of voice with me young man. Now back to the report.
Nikki: Well, in 100 years there are probably going to be new life forms and we might run out of air if we cut down all the trees.